

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

A & B Accessories, Inc.

Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions

Marketing Analysis Leads To Several Improvements At A&B Accessories

Client Profile:

A&B Accessories, Inc. specializes in the manufacture of wooden spa and hot tub surrounds. Its manufacturing facility, located in West Fork, Arkansas, employs 11 people.

Situation:

A&B Accessories, Inc. (A&B) is a member of the Arkansas Wood Manufacturers Association (AWMA). When the company decided to improve its marketing tactics to bring annual sales to the same level as its production capacity, it called the Arkansas Manufacturing Extension Network (the Network), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

The Network recommended that A&B hire a third-party service provider, Harry Watt of Wood Management Systems, to work closely with the company as it developed a new marketing approach. The Network helped A&B secure funding for the project through a grant from the USDA Marketing Grant Program.

Mr. Watt made an on-site analysis of A&B's operation and provided an in-depth analysis of its clients' needs. Based on his findings, Mr. Watt developed a marketing strategy for A&B. Mr. Watt also prepared and presented a written report outlining his recommendations to improve labor utilization and increase throughput in support of these marketing efforts. Mr. Watt visited the plant four times over the course of the following year to review A&B's progress. He reviewed opportunities to improve the marketing plan, as well as factory management concepts, factory layout, and throughput with A&B managers. Meanwhile, the Network helped A&B with a relocation project and also assisted in creating an effective sales presentation and marketing materials that enhanced Mr. Watt's marketing plan. As a result of this initiative, A&B's sales have increased and the company is implementing more of Mr. Watt's recommendations.

Results:

Increased sales.

Developed a sales catalogue product guide as an invaluable sales tool.

Made plans to implement future marketing projects.

Testimonial:

www.mep.nist.gov



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"I would like to thank the Arkansas Wood Manufacturers Association, [the Arkansas Manufacturing Extension Network,] and the USDA Marketing Grant Program for helping us to receive this grant funding. This project was of tremendous benefit to our company. The knowledge that Mr. Harry Watt of Wood Management Systems brings in to make his analysis is very impressive. We are looking forward to implementing all of Mr. Watt's recommendations."

Steve Anderson, President